

puerto rico libre!

bulletin of the puerto rican solidarity committee

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PUERTO RICO IN CRISIS

On April 22 twenty heavily armed FBI agents broke into the homes of Efraín Fernández and Wilfredo Rosado de Jesús. Fernández is the President and Rosado de Jesús a member of the Operators and Cement Workers Union, which recently fought a bitter year-long strike against the Puerto Rican Cement Company. The two men were arrested and accused of conspiring to plant bombs at the cement plant in Ponce last July during the course of the strike. Bail was set at \$75,000 each.

Three weeks earlier, in the early morning hours of March 29, Edwin Meléndez, Elías Castro, Carmen Acevedo and Luis Medina were arrested by the police and accused of possessing a half ton of explosives and arms. All are members of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) and Meléndez is its Secretary of Trade Union Affairs. Bail for the four, originally totalling over \$1 million, was later reduced to \$10,000 each by Judge Felipe Marchand. In a highly unusual move the four were subsequently rearrested by federal agents, and in response to a writ presented by the U.S. Justice Department their bail was reset at the \$1 million figure.

Two days before, thousands of mourners attended the funeral of Santiago Mari Pesquera, who was assassinated on March 25. Mari Pesquera was the eldest son of Juan Mari Bras, Secretary General of the PSP. In a highly emotional statement made soon after his son's death, Mari Bras explained what is happening in Puerto Rico today.

"Within the last few days the symptoms of Imperialist desperation have surfaced. The assassination of our loved and unforgettable Chagui [his son] is not an isolated act of some alienated individual. The hands that manipulate the repressive acts aimed at preventing the rebellion of our people are the same hands that pulled the strings of my son's murder.

"... We are the only growing force in our country. The acts of harassment and persecution by the CIA, FBI, the Intelligence division of the armed forces and the repressive agencies of the colonial regime toward us have been useless. The persecution unleashed by the police agencies against the independence movement, the workers movement and the student movement in Puerto Rico will continue to be useless.

"This homeland—the only one we have—will be free, sovereign and independent. Whatever the cost may be, you can rest assured that the independence of Puerto Rico is an inevitable reality."

The struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico is at a



Thousands attended the funeral of Santiago Mari Pesquera to express their grief and outrage at the brutal assassination.

critical juncture. The independence movement thinks so. So does Henry Kissinger.

The Economic Crisis

Puerto Rico is in the throes of its most severe economic and political crisis. The evidence is well documented in the Report to the Governor by the Committee to Study Puerto Rico's Finances (commonly called the Tobin report after Yale Professor James Tobin who headed the Committee) in the *New York Times* and by the government of Puerto Rico itself. Ramon García Santiago, Secretary of Social Services recently made some stark comparisons. The per capita income in Puerto Rico is 55% of the per capita income in the poorest state of the U.S., Mississippi—this, while the cost of living is 14% higher in Puerto Rico than in the Eastern United States. 193,000 families, representing about one-third of the population, do not have adequate housing. In April, Teodoro Moscoso, architect of Operation Bootstrap, announced that real unemployment in Puerto Rico is 45%. Even during the Great Depression unemployment in the U.S. never approached this staggering level.

Puerto Rico Libre!

in solidarity

The Meaning of the Repression—by Rosa Borenstein

The recent intensified attacks against the Puerto Rican independence movement, so vividly described in this month's lead article, requires an analysis.

Examined separately—the murder, the federal arrests, FBI harassment, the grand jury—any one of these attacks, as brutal as they may be, do not necessarily signal a shift in U.S. strategy towards Puerto Rico.

But put all together, these attacks on the independence movement do point to a new stage in the U.S. government's strategy of maintaining at all costs, Puerto Rico as its principal colony, and therefore crushing at all costs, the liberation struggle.

Unfolding before us is a unique and sharpened attack, directed from the highest levels of the U.S. government, against those forces who are successfully, in the face of the worst economic crisis, meeting an enormous historical challenge by presenting to the Puerto Rican people a viable alternative to the exploitation, oppression and degradation of 75 years of U.S. colonial domination.

We use the word "unique" advisedly, because the cases in which our government can "legally" take the liberation movement of another country to court and prosecute it for breaking U.S. laws are very rare.

But trying up the leadership of the independence movement in costly and time-consuming litigation and at the same time attempting to slander their reputations by labeling them criminals is only one weapon in this juridical arsenal.

H.R. 11200, the bill for the new compact, is a much more clever device. Barely comprehensible to those who do understand the 100-word-long clauses, this hardly seems like the stuff repression is made of. But after all our allegations, the State Department has admitted that the Compact is only immediately useful if it can be brought to bear in the battle to defeat the independence movement on the floor of the United Nations this August.

From Kissinger's calculated barks about Puerto Rico being Cuba's next inviolable target, to Don Pedro Albizu Campos being characterized as a criminal by the New York Times when a local school board decides to rename its school for the great leader, to the linking of the Biocentennial protests, which will loudly demand independence for Puerto Rico, with alleged plots to bomb the official ceremonies—our government is bent on attacking the independence movement on every front.

As we can see, this new assault is not limited to the sphere of courts and diplomatic maneuvers. And as the polarization of the left and right forces in Puerto Rico becomes more discernible, and the credibility of those that support the status quo crumbles before the staggering unemployment figures and other gauges of the bankruptcy of colonial policy, the political climate will take on a more violent character. Those losing the power grip will not tolerate the advances of the independence movement. And right-wing terrorism, like the murder of Juan Mari Bras' son and other violent acts against the independence movement by para-military forces, will certainly increase.

Our government plays a major role in promoting this violence when for instance, it ignores the well-documented claims that death squads are actually organized within the colonial police forces and therefore implicitly condones their existence; and when it refuses to bring to justice those who have been identified as the perpetrators of these violent attacks against the independence movement.

As certain as we are about the well orchestrated repression escalating on all fronts, we are equally sure that a powerful anti-imperialist movement in the United States can do a lot to cripple the hand of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico and make a significant contribution to the conditions that are necessary for the true victory of the Puerto Rican liberation movement. Independence for Puerto Rico! All out on July 4th!

ALBIZU CAMPOS CAUSES A STIR

In an unusually vicious editorial the New York Times visited the renowned Puerto Rican patriot, Pedro Albizu Campos, and berated a local school board, insulting its members and the parents, calling their action to rename their school after Albizu Campos, "idiotic."

On April 22 the Community School Board of District Five (Central Harlem, NYC) affirmed their support of the desire of the parents of PS 161 to change the name of their school from Firella LaGuardia (former mayor of New York) to Don Pedro Albizu Campos.

At a press conference held to respond to the Times denunciations Della Ortiz, president of the School Board, termed the editorial "a specious, divisive, illogical and racist appeal to fear and hysteria."

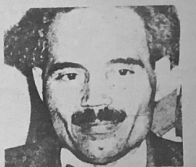
In supporting the decision, Mrs. Ortiz and other Board members—who are Black—stated to the press:

"The suggestion that Mr. Campos' name is inappropriate because of the allegation that he 'could applaud and encourage assassination' is indeed 'ironic'. The Church Committee of the US Senate confirmed for the record that our CIA was involved in assassination attempts throughout the world. A society responsible for attempts on Castro's life, for subversion in Chile, for armed intervention in the Dominican Republic, and for a long train of outrages in Latin America, can hardly protest the employment of their tactics against themselves."

"... The Black and Hispanic community has no reason to fear those who fight for the oppressed and economically

"That the N.Y. Times speaks disparagingly of Mr. Campos is not surprising. It is consistent with their insults to the Hon. Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Hon. Paul Robeson, Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, Hon. Malcolm X, and any other men and women of color who were courageous enough to insist on equality of rights and privileges."

Pedro Albizu Campos



STATE DEPARTMENT AIMS EXPOSED

"There is now growing concern that the proposed Compact of Permanent Union between Puerto Rico and the United States may not be acted on in this session of Congress."

"This is more serious than might appear."

"If the Compact is not passed... Puerto Rico... could itself enter a period of political polarization which could lead to political instability."

These are not the words of Puerto Rico Libre! A secret memorandum dated March 25, circulated by the public relations agency of the Commonwealth government—the Puerto Rican Information Service—admits to the importance of the Compact to the U.S. government.

The independence movement and the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee have consistently maintained that the Compact, in bill form HR 11200 since December, was and is being used by the U.S. State Department to block discussion of Puerto Rico in the United Nations.

At hearings on the bill conducted by the House Committee on Territorial and Insular Affairs, chairman of the Subcommittee Representative Philip Burton (D-CA) denied that there was any relation whatsoever between the compact and the case of Puerto Rico at the U.N. Burton also claimed that Henry Kissinger knew nothing about it. It is evident that as long as the State Department has had everything to do with the development of the Compact, We quote directly from the Commonwealth public relations' letter, never intended for the public eye.

"The U.S. State Department (as well as the government

of Puerto Rico) is anxious for the Compact to pass before Fall for another reason: an expected, Cuban-led assault in the United Nations on the United States as being a 'colonial oppressor' of Puerto Rico.

"Last year, the attempt to brand the United States in this way failed by a few votes, mostly because of energetic action by U.N. Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan and by representatives of the Puerto Rican government. The thrust of the Puerto Rican presentation to the U.N. members was that the island has self-determination, and that the Compact, then just being completed by the Ad-Hoc Group, was an important manifestation of this self-determination in action."

The Puerto Rican Information Service letter leaves little room for doubt about the aims of the State Department. The use of the Compact as "proof" that Puerto Rico has exercised self-determination is nothing less than a bad joke. The Compact from its inception has been subject to the whims and fancies of the U.S. government. In a recent editorial Miguel Santin, a leading columnist for the island daily El Nuevo Dia, renamed the pompously titled Compact of Permanent Union between Puerto Rico and the United States, "Burton's Compact of Federal Concessions."

What little control the few Puerto Ricans appointed by Governor Hernandez Colar had over the discussions and debate regarding HR 11200 is gone. To this date three of the most substantial clauses of the bill have been removed by Burton. These are the immigration, environmental and labor relations (minimum wage) sections. As Santin stated

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A CALL TO A NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION JULY 4, 1976

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume . . . the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature . . . entitle them . . .

On July 4, 1976, Gerald Ford, Queen Elizabeth and Nelson Rockefeller will gather in Philadelphia to put on an outrageous and hypocritical spectacle, claiming to celebrate freedom, independence, and justice.

We call on the people of this country to join us in Philadelphia on that day to demonstrate before the world that we will not allow this government to make a mockery of these human rights in our name! A government—

- which is controlled by big banks and transnational corporations,
- which intervenes in other countries and suppresses people's struggles around the world, as in Vietnam, Angola and Chile,

- which tells us to tighten our belts to solve the economic crisis they created,

- which spends hundreds of billions of dollars to prepare for war to protect their investments, and

- which, in this depression, heightens even more the divisions among us and fosters competition to keep us from uniting.

We will demand freedom, full equality, economic well-being and justice for all the people in this land.

We will point to the irony of celebrating the War of Independence of the thirteen colonies against British colonial rule when today the United States government is itself a colonial power.

We will take this historical opportunity to demand **Independence for Puerto Rico, the principal colony of the United States, and call for the right of self-determination and independence for all nations oppressed by the U.S. government.**

Senator Henry Jackson has put it bluntly: "Puerto Rico is ours as booty of war." Any authority the U.S. has comes solely from the invasion and occupation of the island by U.S. troops in 1898.

Political Domination of Puerto Rico

- occupied by the U.S. military, who control 10% of its best land
- U.S. citizenship imposed on its people in 1917, in time for them to serve in World War I
- its men drafted into four wars, to fight and die for a government they do not elect
- laws passed by its legislature can be amended, suspended or revoked by U.S. Congress
- subject to final jurisdiction of the U.S. Supreme Court, even in matters relating to its own constitution
- U.S. regulates immigration, trade relations, labor relations, postal service and 76 other vital areas

Economic Domination of Puerto Rico

- The key to U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico is economic control. Puerto Rico:
- must use the U.S. dollar for its currency
- 85% of its industry controlled by U.S. corporations
- its agriculture almost completely destroyed

- industry not for its own people's needs
- forced to import food and necessities from the U.S. at higher prices
- captive market for U.S. goods—the fifth largest market for U.S. goods in the world
- yields one-tenth of all U.S. profits from investments abroad
- U.S. controlled industry has not brought a better life for the Puerto Rican people.
- Puerto Rican workers earn 45% less than U.S. workers on the same job
- government officials admit that the real unemployment rate is 45%
- 65% of Puerto Rican families depend on food stamps to survive
- 52% of Puerto Rican families earn less than \$3000 a year

Cultural Domination and Survival of a Nation

For over 75 years, the U.S. government has tried to destroy the culture and national identity of the Puerto Rican people. Forced migration—the result of the distortion of the Puerto Rican economy and the destruction of its agricultural base—has driven millions from the island. Today over 40% of the Puerto Rican people live in the U.S., where they face great poverty and discrimination.

This exodus has been accompanied by a campaign of forced sterilization, similar to the one being promoted actively today in this country by the government among Black, Puerto Rican, Mexican, American Indian and other poor women.



Over 35% of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age have been sterilized. This is the highest rate in the world. These sterilizations are given free in special clinics funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. Women are advised that they can help reduce the unemployment on the island by not having children.

Until 1948, Spanish was not permitted in the classrooms of Puerto Rican schools, and it was illegal to display the Puerto Rican flag until 1952. Puerto Rican history was U.S. history, and George Washington became the founding father of Puerto Rico.

When a long train of abuses and usurpations . . . evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such a government.

The Puerto Rican people have always fought foreign domination. Today, the growing independence movement is only the tip of the iceberg of the deeply-felt sentiments of the Puerto Rican people for the preservation and affirmation of their national identity. The economic crisis that shakes this country is far worse on the island. Today the question for the Puerto Rican people is not "Can Puerto Rico survive without the U.S.?" but "Can Puerto Rico survive with the U.S.?"

The combative trade union movement understands that the workers' problems cannot be solved until Puerto Rico is free of U.S. colonialism. The massive incorporation of workers into the independence movement has spurred it to higher levels of organization and militancy, while it extends to other sectors of society—students, professionals and clergy.

The U.S. government, with the cooperation of its "Thieu regime" on the island, relies to this change by intensifying repression against both the workers' and the independence struggles. Even more than at home, the U.S. government and corporations use company unions and the National Labor Relations Board to break strikes and stop organizing drives which threaten their profits. Activists in the independence movement are harassed by the same FBI and CIA which try to monitor and control our lives in this country. Now these Federal agencies are using counter-insurgency methods tested against the Black movement and in Vietnam—violence designed to cower people into submission. Recently, the eldest son of the leader of a major pro-independence organization, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, was assassinated, a strategy used in this country against Black and American Indian leaders.

In a more subtle repression, the U.S. government tries time and again to devise a legal "cover" to disguise its domination of Puerto Rico. Since the "Commonwealth" fiction is being exposed, there is now a bill in Congress called the "Compact of Permanent Union" (HR 11200) which claims to give Puerto Rico more autonomy, but in reality would tie it closer to the U.S. The "Compact" is aimed at preventing United Nations' action for Puerto Rican independence by defining the question as an "internal affair" of the U.S. It can and must be defeated.

These moves have only deepened the Puerto Rican people's commitment to resist U.S. domination. Five heroes of this resistance, the Nationalist Political Prisoners, have been in U.S. Federal prisons since 1950 and 1954.

These patriots launched an armed attack on the President's residence and the U.S. Congress to bring the colonial case of Puerto Rico before the eyes of the world, at a time when hundreds of Puerto Ricans were being killed and jailed for supporting independence. The fight for their immediate unconditional release is a rallying point of international solidarity with the Puerto Rican people.

Let facts be submitted to a candid world . . .

It is clear that Puerto Rico's struggle for independence is an integral part of that powerful historical force which is a prime characteristic of our epoch—the anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation. Puerto Rico's struggle is the struggle of Vietnam, Angola, Southern Africa and oppressed people everywhere.

Today, there is a wave of support for the Puerto Rican struggle throughout the world. Over 100 countries affirmed the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence in the United Nations General Assembly. Additional support has come from the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations and from the International Conference of representatives from more than 79 countries held last September in Havana.

... Declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.

On July 4th, 1976, we will expose before the whole world the hypocrisy of the official "bicentennial celebration of independence." We will not let the U.S. government suppress the Puerto Rican people's fight for freedom in our name. The Puerto Rican independence movement cannot be stopped. This was proved in the American Revolution when the British Empire was defeated. And it is shown in our own time, when the small country of Vietnam drove the U.S. from its land.

There is no question that colonialism does not benefit the Puerto Rican people. We, the people of this country, also have nothing to gain from colonialism in Puerto Rico.

The independence of this country rests on the slavery of Black people, the theft of the American Indian people's land, and the denial of equal rights to these oppressed peoples, as well as to women and propertyless workers. Oppression and exploitation continue today. The movement for freedom in this country will not be stopped either.

We don't want our tax money used to protect the huge profits of the few, bringing starvation wages to our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters.

We want the resources of this country used to meet all people's needs—more and better schools, hospitals, day care centers, jobs for the unemployed.

The same corporations and government that exploit Puerto Rico deny us our needs. We join with the Puerto Rican people in their just struggle for independence. Their freedom will bring us closer to our own.

JOIN US ON JULY 4th!

INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICANS

FREE THE FIVE NATIONALIST POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Grand Juries Hit Independentistas in Puerto Rico and New York

San Juan, April 27—The Court of Appeals of the First Circuit Court in Boston upheld the six month sentence imposed by the Courts in Puerto Rico on Edgar Maury Santiago.

Maury Santiago, a member of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, was sentenced for refusing to answer questions of a federal Grand Jury investigating the robbery of 3,650 pounds of Iremite, an explosive, in July, 1974.

One of the arguments presented by lawyers for the defense was that the Federal Government is using the Grand Jury to punish Maury Santiago for his pro-independence beliefs.

New York, April 29—Independentistas Lureida Torres faces a contempt of court hearing on May 6 for standing firm in her decision to not cooperate with a grand jury investigating alleged



Errata

In the last issue of PRL we mislabeled that Lureida Torres "is being forced to testify" before the Grand Jury. In fact, Torres was forced to appear, but refused to answer any questions in a highly principled and courageous act.

Mercury Poisonings Revealed

San Juan, April—Nearly 300 residents of the town of Juncos have serious physical and mental disorders resulting from mercury contamination. They have charged that the U.S. firm, Bechtel Dickinson, a thermometer factory in Juncos, channels its waste into adjacent waters.

Secretary of Labor Dr. Silva Recio stated that he had investigated the charges and that everything is "under control." Meanwhile, offi-

cials of the federal Environmental Protection Agency disclaimed any knowledge of the problem at Bechtel Dickinson which they classified as "only a minor source of contamination." For this reason they have kept no data on the factory and have begun no investigation.

The Puerto Rican House of Representatives has sent three commissions to Juncos to investigate the charges.

Puerto Rican terrorist activities.

Torres, a member of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, declared that she refused to testify "because the grand jury was being used by the U.S. Attorney and the FBI to persecute supporters of Puerto Rican Independence."

In a related development Rafael Perez Nunez of Naugatuck, Connecticut, was subpoenaed to appear on April 28 in New York City by the same Grand Jury that called Torres. Nunez is refusing to answer any questions on similar grounds.

Suspect in Mari Pequera Murder Arrested

San Juan, March 27—Henry Walter Coira Stori was arrested and charged with the murder of Santiago Mari Pequera and with violations of the Arms Law of Puerto Rico. He is being held under \$125,000 bail.

Coira Stori was known to be hostile to anyone with sympathies for the independence movement.

Salixto Medina, District Attorney of Caguas, has begun an investigation to determine whether the assassination was conspiratorial.

New Committee for Nationalists

San Juan, April 20—Reflecting the island-wide support for their freedom, a National Committee for the Freedom of the Nationalist Prisoners has been formed for the purpose of stepping up the campaign for the unconditional release of Lolita Lebron, Oscar Collazo, Andres Figueroa, Irvin Flores and Rafael Cancel Miranda. Pedro Albizu Meneses, son of Pedro Albizu Campos, was named President, Nelson Canales Secretary General and Noel Colon Martinez Secretary of International Affairs.

Among the activities planned by the Committee are a meeting of Puerto Rican and North American jurists with the U.S. Attorney General and a second meeting of religious leaders with President Ford. In addition, petitions demanding the release of the prisoners will be circulated throughout the island. Other plans include the production of an educational record about the Five.

The Committee's target date for the release of the prisoners is July 4.

INDEPENDENCE LEADERS TOUR U.S.

The Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee is sponsoring a national tour of prominent leaders of the independence movement in conjunction with the National July 4th mobilization. In the first tour of its type, Noel Colon Martinez, Margarita Mergal and Luis Rivera Pagan will travel to New York City, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, St. Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Jose to give a first hand report on what's happening in Puerto Rico today.

Noel Colon Martinez ran for governor in 1972 on the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) ticket. He is currently the President of the Puerto Rican Peace Council and led the Puerto Rican delegation to the International Conference in Solidarity with Puerto Rico's Independence held last September in Cuba. Colon Martinez is also one of the lawyers for the Five Nationalist prisoners.

Margarita Mergal is a college professor, who ran for

Mayor of San Juan on the PIP ticket with Colon Martinez in 1972. She was also a delegate to the International Conference. Mergal is currently trying to organize non-affiliated independentistas, a very large force in the independence movement, in a non-partisan group that she hopes would promote closer cooperation among the pro-independence groups and parties.

Luis Rivera Pagan, former Secretary of Political Education of the PIP is presently a member of the Puerto Rican Committee of Christians for Socialism. He is also a member of the National Committee to Free the Five Nationalist Prisoners.

All three left the Puerto Rican Independence Party a couple of years ago and remain unaffiliated.

The three will visit various cities and the tour will span the dates May 11 through May 26.

(Crisis, Continued from P. 1)

The Political Crisis—Disillusion of the Colonial Parties

What are the solutions to these pressing problems proposed by the government of Puerto Rico? Only more of the same. The strategy of Operation Bootstrap—to attract foreign (U.S.) capital through tax exemptions and low wages for the workers of Puerto Rico—is what is offered by Governor Colon, by Moscoso, by U.S. economist James Tobin.

In the 1940's the Popular Democratic Party (Partido Popular Democratico, PPD) captured the attention of the masses of Puerto Rican people with its slogan, "Broad, Land and Liberty." Once in power the PPD, led by Munoz Marin, abandoned its pro-independence posture, believing that the economic and social problems could be solved before addressing the question of status. The PPD was instrumental in the development of Operation Bootstrap and in the creation of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in 1952.

It has been said that Bootstrap transformed Puerto Rico into a success symbol for the developing world. But as the February, 1976, Time magazine stated, "Bootstrap had built in dangers. While processing products for export, Puerto Rico became highly dependent on imports of all kinds (the trade deficit was \$1.8 billion in fiscal 1975)." Bootstrap spelled boobytrap for Puerto Rico in the sense that it fostered an island economy totally dependent on the U.S.

Today it is obvious to all but a few diehards that Operation Bootstrap failed to meet the needs of the Puerto Rican people—though it can be said that it succeeded in filling the coffers of U.S. corporations. And the Commonwealth, once hailed as an end to colonialism in Puerto Rico, is only bringing greater dependence on the United States.

In a recent interview, former Governor Roberto Sanchez Vilella, who just announced that he was leaving the ruling Popular Democratic Party, put it this way: "Today in Puerto Rico there are two statehood parties," referring to the PPD and the self-proclaimed pro-statehood New Progressive Party. "On the one hand the Popular Party attacks statehood, but its policies promote greater dependency on the United States. The equation is simple: greater dependency, less liberty. Statehood," said Vilella, "would mean the death of the Puerto Rican people."

Vilella is representative of a growing sector of the Puerto Rican people who have lost faith in the Commonwealth or statehood parties, many of whom are looking in the direction of the independence movement for solutions.

Meanwhile, the growth of the independence movement is very significant. For example, in late March over 7,000 persons turned out to protest the U.S. Congressional hearing on the Compact of Permanent Union being held in San Juan. This protest was organized by the Puerto Rican Independence and Socialist Parties on a week's notice.

In fact, the influence of the independence movement goes far beyond the movement itself. Tens and even

(Continued on next page)

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Coming next month!! New Expanded Puerto Rico Libre!

The struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico is on the upsurge and so is the solidarity movement in the United States. Our usual 12 pages burst at the seams each month covering the rapid pace of events in Puerto Rico and internationally.

So why is this issue of Puerto Rico

Libre! only eight pages? We are gearing up for the production of a new and expanded 16 page Puerto Rico Libre! And to keep our costs down we are printing on newsprint rather than heavy offset paper. We are not raising our subscription rates, but do need your support to grow.

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(Crisis, Continued from P.7)

hundreds of thousands of persons have been mobilized in the name of the colonial government—for example, in the fight against the Superport, and in numerous struggles by workers to defend their living standards. Last fall 60,000 workers staged a one day work stoppage to protest the colonial government's anti-labor austerity measures, specifically demanding that the governor not sign the Personnel Bill.

Government Response—Repression

The United States Government is quite aware of the tumultuous shifts in Puerto Rican society and its response is to unleash a repressive campaign the likes of which have not been seen in Puerto Rico since the attempt to suppress the Nationalist Party in the 1950's. The murder of Mari Pesquera and the arrests mentioned above are just the tip of the iceberg.

We could fill this bulletin with more examples of repression: the attempted frameup of labor leader Federico Cintron; the recent conviction in New York of Jose Che Velasquez on a two-year-old charge resulting from his opposition to the Vietnam War; the suspicious death of a PSP member in Chicago; the ever-increasing frequency of visits and harassment by the FBI of *independentistas*.

The independence movement has documented the existence of right wing terrorist bands organized and supported by the CIA and the FBI. One year ago the PSP named names and publicly denounced the participation of two of these groups, "Abdala" and the so-called "National Liberation Front of Cuba" in the terrorist bombing of a PSP activity in January 1975 at Mayaguez, which left two workers dead and many others wounded. Ex-CIA agent Manuel de Armas recently verified the existence of these right wing bands (which operate in the United States and Latin America as well as Puerto Rico).

These repressive acts cannot be viewed apart from the anti-labor decisions of the National Labor Relations Board during the strike at the Puerto Rican Cement Plant and in the case of the National Workers Union or the Federal Grand Juries now subpoenaing *independentistas* in New York and in Puerto Rico.

At a time when gubernatorial candidate Juan Mari Bras has called on the colonial parties for a peaceful atmosphere in which to conduct rational discussion and intelligent debate of ideas, the repression confronting the independence movement today is a deliberate provocation.

In his call for a "peaceful atmosphere" in the election

campaign, Mari Bras outlined what he meant.

"We must begin by demanding that the FBI, the CIA, etc., put an immediate stop to their anti-socialist and anti-independence actions in Puerto Rico.

"The terrorist bands of the right, organized by Yankee intelligence and supported by a PNP faction, must be dismantled.

"The criminal and corrupt elements that operate within the Police Department of Puerto Rico must be cleaned out. Even Police Superintendent Astor Calero has admitted the existence of a so-called death squad within the said department.

"The same opportunities that the colonial capitalist parties have with respect to the election campaign must be guaranteed, without any stratagems or hypocrisies, for the independence parties, so that they can take their messages and political ideology to the people.

"If the leadership of the country agrees to provide the political climate, they can count on the Puerto Rican Socialist Party to scrupulously meet the terms of that commitment. The right of our people to hear, discuss, reflect and make their political decisions in peace will then be guaranteed.

"Ignoring this proposal and continuing the repressive plan and brutal conspiracy against the independence and socialist movements is tantamount to submerging the country in a state of war."

DB

(State Dept., Continued from P. 3)

very plainly: "The Compact is whatever Burton wants the Compact to be."

Far from being the bilateral agreement between two sovereign political entities—Puerto Rico and the United States—which its proponents claimed, the Compact actually has always been completely in the hands of the U.S. Congress. There is nothing at all bilateral about this process.

Speaking April 28 in Lusaka, Zambia, in what was billed as the major political speech of his African tour, State Secretary Henry Kissinger cynically stated, "The colonial era is a thing of the past." And while Puerto Rico is kept in U.S. colonial shackles, Kissinger had the audacity to call the United States "one of the prime movers of the process of decolonization." Colonialism is the only word that rightly describes the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States today, Kissinger's opinion aside.

DB

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